

gas) do not count against royalty suspension volumes; and

(b) Production includes volumes allocated to a lease under an approved unit agreement.

§ 260.121 When does a lease issued in a sale held after November 2000 get a royalty suspension?

(a) We will specify any royalty suspension for your RS lease in the Notice of OCS Lease Sale published in the FEDERAL REGISTER for the sale in which you acquire the RS lease and will repeat it in the lease document. In addition:

(1) Your RS lease may produce royalty-free the royalty suspension we specify for your lease, even if the field to which we assign it is producing.

(2) The royalty suspension we specify in the Notice of OCS Lease Sale for your lease does not apply to any other leases in the field to which we assign your RS lease.

(b) You may apply for a supplemental royalty suspension for a project under part 203 of this title, if your lease is located:

(1) In the Gulf of Mexico, in water 200 meters or deeper, and wholly west of 87 degrees, 30 minutes West longitude; or

(2) Offshore of Alaska.

(c) Your RS lease retains the royalty suspension with which we issued it even if we deny your application for more relief.

[66 FR 11518, Feb. 23, 2001, as amended at 73 FR 69517, Nov. 18, 2008]

§ 260.122 How long will a royalty suspension volume be effective for a lease issued in a sale held after November 2000?

(a) The royalty suspension volume for your RS lease will continue through the end of the month in which cumulative production from your lease reaches the applicable royalty suspension volume or the lease period ends.

(b)(1) Notwithstanding any royalty suspension volume under this subpart, you must pay royalty at the lease stipulated rate on:

(i) Any oil produced for any period stipulated in the lease during which the arithmetic average of the daily closing price on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) for light

sweet crude oil exceeds the applicable threshold price of \$36.39 per barrel, adjusted annually after calendar year 2007 for inflation unless the lease terms prescribe a different price threshold.

(ii) Any natural gas produced for any period stipulated in the lease during which the arithmetic average of the daily closing price on the NYMEX for natural gas exceeds the applicable threshold price of \$4.55 per MMBtu, adjusted annually after calendar year 2007 for inflation unless the lease terms prescribe a different price threshold.

(iii) Determine the threshold price for any calendar year after 2007 by adjusting the threshold price in the previous year by the percentage that the implicit price deflator for the gross domestic product, as published by the Department of Commerce, changed during the calendar year.

(2) You must pay any royalty due under this paragraph, plus late payment interest under §218.54 of this title, no later than 90 days after the end of the period for which royalty is owed.

(3) Any production on which you must pay royalty under this paragraph will count toward the production volume determined under §§260.120 through 260.124.

(c) If you must pay royalty on any product (either oil or natural gas) for any period under paragraph (b), you must continue to pay royalty on that product during the next succeeding period of the same length until the arithmetic average of the daily closing NYMEX prices for that product for that period can be determined. If the arithmetic average of the daily closing prices for that product for that period is less than the threshold price stipulated in the lease, you are entitled to a credit or refund of royalties paid for that period with interest under applicable law.

[66 FR 11518, Feb. 23, 2001, as amended at 73 FR 69517, Nov. 18, 2008]

§ 260.123 How do I measure natural gas production for a lease issued in a sale held after November 2000?

You must measure natural gas production subject to the royalty suspension volume for your lease as follows: 5.62 thousand cubic feet of natural gas,

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measured according to part 250, subpart L of this title, equals one barrel of oil equivalent.

§ 260.124 How will royalty suspension apply if MMS assigns a lease issued in a sale held after November 2000 to a field that has a pre-Act lease?

(a) We will assign your lease that has a qualifying well (under part 250, subpart A of this title) to an existing field or designate a new field and will notify you and other affected lessees and operating rights holders in the field of that assignment.

(1) Within 15 days of the final notification, you or any of the other affected lessees or operating rights holders may file a written request with the Director for reconsideration, accompanied by a Statement of Reasons.

(2) The Director will respond in writing either affirming or reversing the assignment decision. The Director's decision is the final action of the Department of the Interior and is not subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under part 290 of this title and 43 CFR part 4.

(b) If we establish a royalty suspension volume for a field as a result of an approved application for royalty relief submitted for a pre-Act lease under part 203 of this chapter, then:

(1) Royalty-free production from your RS lease shares from and counts as part of any royalty suspension volume under §260.114(d) for the field to which we assign your lease; and

(2) Your RS lease may continue to produce royalty-free up to the royalty suspension we specified for your lease, even if the field to which we assign your RS lease has produced all of its royalty suspension volume.

(c) Your lease may share in a suspension volume larger than the royalty suspension with which we issued it and to the extent we grant a larger volume in response to an application by a pre-Act lease submitted under part 203 of this title. To share in any larger royalty suspension volume, you must file an application described in §§203.71 and 203.83. In no case will royalty-free production for your RS lease be less than

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the royalty suspension specified for your lease.

[66 FR 11518, Feb. 23, 2001, as amended at 67 FR 57739, Sept. 12, 2002; 73 FR 58473, Oct. 7, 2008]

BIDDING SYSTEM SELECTION CRITERIA

§ 260.130 What criteria does MMS use for selecting bidding systems and bidding system components?

In analyzing the application of one of the bidding systems listed in §260.110 to tracts selected for any OCS lease sale, we may, at our discretion, consider the following purposes and policies. We recognize that each of the purposes and policies may not be specifically applicable to the selection process for a particular bidding system or tract, or may present a conflict that we will have to resolve in the process of bidding system selection. The order of listing does not denote a ranking.

(a) Providing fair return to the Federal Government;

(b) Increasing competition;

(c) Ensuring competent and safe operations;

(d) Avoiding undue speculation;

(e) Avoiding unnecessary delays in exploration, development, and production;

(f) Discovering and recovering oil and gas;

(g) Developing new oil and gas resources in an efficient and timely manner;

(h) Limiting the administrative burdens on Government and industry; and

(i) Providing an opportunity to experiment with various bidding systems to enable us to identify those most appropriate for the satisfaction of the objectives of the United States in OCS lease sales.

Subpart C [Reserved]

Subpart D—Joint Bidding

§ 260.301 What is the purpose of this subpart?

The purpose of this subpart is to encourage participation in OCS oil and gas lease sales by limiting the requirement for filing “Statements of Production” to certain joint bidders.